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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION RICE IRAQ MEPP IRAN;BERLIN

- A. Lead Stories Summary
- B. (Germany-U.S.) Rice Visit, Renditions
- C. (Iraq) Violence
- D. (MEPP) Peace Process
- E. (Iran) Russian Missiles

- A. Lead Stories Summary

HEADLINES

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Rice In Berlin - "We Respect The Law" (Frankfurter Allgemeine)

Merkel Calls Upon Steinmeier To Reveal What he Knows (Sueddeutsche Zeitung)

Merkel Annoys Rice During Rice Visit (Die Welt)

Rice Thinks United States Is In The Right (Frankfurter Rundschau)

Rice Admits Mistakes In Hunt For Terrorists (Tagesspiegel)

Merkel Confronts Rice (Berliner Zeitung)

Editorials focused on Secretary Rice's visit and the controversy over the future EU budget. ZDF-TV's early evening newscast heute and ARD-TV's early evening newscast Tagesschau opened with stories on the meeting between Chancellor Merkel and Secretary Rice.

B. (Germany-U.S.) Rice Visit, Renditions

1. Thomas Baumann commented on ARD-TV's (national channel one) late evening newscast Tagesthemen (12/6):

"The United States thinks it is in a war. It is naive to believe that the U.S. government would really change its ways if one simply speaks plain English. These are means - and Chancellor Merkel at least mentioned it - that are not justified by the end. With a calm voice but clarity in the matter itself, she went to the limits of diplomacy. She has not made herself the quiet supporter of a policy that continues to cross the line.. We could be cynical and say that the collateral damage caused by the el-Masri case can be limited only if the international community together increases pressure on the United States. Europe now has the chance to develop a joint position, to do something better than it did before the outbreak of the Iraq war."

2. "The Ball Is Out"

Stefan Dietrich commented in center-right Frankfurter Allgemeine (12/7):

"Those who placed a 'CIA scandal' in front of the new chancellor's door to test her commitment to the United States could not have enjoyed this. After the German media turned the 'secret' flights into a scandal, the Americans

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kicked the ball back through the press, not to Merkel but to her Red-Green predecessor. If the former German interior minister were already informed that a German was erroneously kidnapped, the question of whether Schily was right not to inform the Munich prosecutors who investigated this case could be posed. If Schily knew about the case, the former Chancellery's chief of staff, Steinmeier, must have had an idea about it."

3. "Law A La Rice"

Stefan Kornelius noted in center-left Sueddeutsche Zeitung of Munich (12/7):

"Rice had the clear intention to rectify America's loss of credibility and to foster the structures of the transatlantic alliance. She now tells her partners that the law was bent on both sides and that everybody should clean up its own house. Merkel is suddenly trapped. A grand coalition means she has to accept the sins of the previous government. This does not create a new alliance. The fierceness of the secretary's tone was not meant to deter the Europeans.. Rice's careful treading of the legal matters, saying that the U.S. does not torture and the renditions respect international law, is a result of the controversy at home. According to American law, water boarding is not torture. It is torture according to German law.. Rice came to Germany to begin a new era. She completely failed. The time is not ripe. A change of staff is not enough to begin a new relationship. It does not matter whether Schily was informed about the flights. Injustice remains injustice, and wrong policies remain wrong. This cannot be the foundation for a renewal of transatlantic relations."

4. "Among Friends"

Hugo Mller-Vogg observed in mass-circulation, right-of-center tabloid Bild-Zeitung of Hamburg (12/7):

"Those who want to continue to weaken the damaged German-American relationship welcome the reports on questionable CIA practices, because they can now blame the 'evil Americans.' Angela Merkel wants the opposite. She wants to repair what had been the foundation of German foreign policy and a guarantee for German security for decades - the close friendship with America. Unlike many West Germans, the chancellor from the East has not forgotten to whom she owes her freedom. Even the United States does

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not expect that we welcome every single operation in the war on terror, but they can expect that we do not accuse them of dishonorable intentions. The chancellor did the right thing during the visit of the American secretary of state. She said what had to be said. At the same time she kept the balance between open words among friends and exposing the other. That is the way true friends deal with each other."

5. "With All Respect"

Robert Birnbaum editorialized in centrist Der Tagesspiegel of Berlin (12/7):

"The CDU/CSU unwillingness to pursue foreign policy on the back of the relationship with America had often taken its toll. Its transatlantic faithfulness paid off for the first time this Tuesday. Chancellor Merkel had a word with U.S. Secretary Rice on the issue of secret services and the rule of law. Compared to diplomatic traditions, the words were clear. Rice listened to her and admitted American mistakes. That sounds as if it was not much given the accusations that the CIA operates covert prisons in Eastern Europe, in which suspected terrorists are tortured, and that European airports are used as stopovers for transporting detainees.. The German problem is that there are indications that the U.S. already admitted this to the former government, which kept silent over the embarrassing case. No strong words. One could call this realpolitik. Foreign policy is a difficult field because other countries do not pursue policies according to our constitution. However, the [former government's] sense of reality grossly contradicts the moral claims expressed in its usually strong statements. Merkel rather believes in classic foreign policy. Don't step on other people's toes but take a clear point of view: Secret services are necessary but they have to respect democracy and the rule of law."

6. "Praise For The Foreign Chancellor"

Bettina Vestring commented in left-of-center Berliner Zeitung (12/7):

"Helmut Kohl began his time as chancellor with a wrong decision: He forced the U.S. president to visit a military graveyard where SS soldiers were buried. Gerhard Schröder managed to get the entire European Union up in arms in his first months by accusing them of wasting German money. Angela Merkel gives one faultless foreign policy performance after another after her inauguration two weeks ago. She

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delivered a real masterpiece this Tuesday: During a meeting with U.S. Secretary Rice, she managed to obtain information on a tricky case for the United States. For the first time, Rice admitted that the U.S. intelligence was involved in kidnapping and deporting a German national to Afghanistan. Even more than that, the U.S. secretary of state admitted that this was a mistake. If mistakes are made they will be rectified. One very rarely hears such sentences from a secretary of state who represents the only remaining superpower. Merkel did not only get her to say such words but also remained friendly, so her guest could not do anything else but smile."

7. Lothar Schröder had this to say in a commentary in regional radio station Westdeutscher Rundfunk of Cologne (12/6):

"If we listen to Condoleezza Rice, everything seems to be in order. The United States does not tolerate torture, acts according to the rule of law in the fight against terrorism, and if mistakes happen, then they will be quickly corrected. In this situation, Angela Merkel can only nod in agreement.. Only the Americans determine the rules and all other nations are called upon to follow even if this includes a path to illegitimacy.. But now the point has been reached where the loyalty to the alliance is being overstretched.. If [the former government knew about the el Masri case], it was an accomplice of human rights violations. Foreign Minister Steinmeier, the former coordinator of intelligence service activities in the Chancellery, is now to inform the Parliamentary Control Committee in a confidential meeting on the affair. In this respect, Rice is right: no excitement, a quiet settlement of the problem.. We recommend to the German government less courteous restraint."

8. Centrist Neue Osnabrücker Zeitung (12/7) observed:

"Condoleezza Rice did not convince Berlin. The secretary of state was maneuvering regarding the affair of the CIA's dubious practices. She was not able to clear up the suspicion that German law was violated, nor did Rice apologize for the kidnapping of German national Khaled el Masri. The result is that irritation remains and the leadership in Washington must continue to live with the reputation that it does not stick to the rule of law in the fight against terrorists. That is why Rice will encounter even greater difficulty to mobilize the allies in the campaign against Osama bin Laden."

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9. Center-right Braunschweiger Zeitung (12/07) opined:

"The reference to the terrorist attacks in Madrid, Casablanca, Amman, London, New York and Washington is to nip the discussion over U.S. practices in the bud. The focus on

the brutal attacks against the civilized world makes all other problems appear of secondary, even unimportant, significance. The question Rice and her president consistently ignore is simple: How can the allies be integrated into the fight against terrorism without them having to tolerate the violation of the law?. To the extent to which Washington and the CIA possibly violate conditions laid down in international law, such violations will create international fragmentation and non-compliance with the law. But the law of the jungle would be a manifestation of bankruptcy, the consequences of which would have to be borne by mankind as a whole."

10. Centrist Sdkurier of Ulm (12/07) argued:

"President Bush's chief diplomat refers to the fact that the interrogation methods of their intelligence agents foiled attacks and thus saved lives, including in Europe. But as long as innocent people are kidnapped and imprisoned in dark dungeons at ends of the world, something is wrong in the fight against terror. That is why the case of the kidnapped German national should not simply be filed away. Each state has the duty to defend its citizens instead of leaving them in lurch. The rice visit to Berlin leaves many unanswered questions, a lot of distrust. In addition, a few top German politicians must now allow the question whether they knew more than they are willing to admit presently."

11. "Sphinx From Washington"

Right-of-center Nordbayerischer Kurier of Bayreuth (12/07) argued:

"Now a Damocles sword is hovering over transatlantic relations. The sphinx from Washington (Secretary Rice) has kept all formulations deliberately vague. Different political cultures are now coming to the fore. Germany still has difficulty with an unusual America that wages wars without coordinating its moves with the UN. And Washington has problems with a fully sovereign Germany. The suspicion that has come up cannot be overcome because of the affair surrounding the CIA."

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12. Right-of-center Saarbrcker Zeitung (12/07)
editorialized:

"One knows what could be the result if fundamental legal principles are suspended by invalidating their basis. That is why the hypocrisy with which the Red-Green government with ex-interior minister Schily at the helm has treated precarious information from the United States is all the more reprehensible. It is true that Chancellor Merkel visibly tried to preserve the balance between her own system of values and the (foreign) policy needs, but meaningless diplomatic phrases alone are no longer enough. The Berlin government should withstand the temptation to sweep the problem under the rug initiated by a falsely understood friendship. A parliamentary fact-finding committee would not be the worst solution in order to bring a scandalous behavior to light."

13. "Shadow Cast on Germany"

Centrist Mitteldeutsche Zeitung of Halle (12/06) carries an editorial by Sibylle Quenett:

"Going by the news reports, the Schroeder government's publicly proclaimed distance to the U.S. may very well just have been a verbal shame. When it should have spoken up, it remained silent. The Merkel government will now have to bear the consequences."

14. "The Unlawful"

Deputy-editor-in-chief Gerlinde Sommer maintains in centrist Thuringische Landeszeitung of Weimar (12/06):

"The war on terror currently translates into getting down to the terrorists' level and putting all laws aside. No right to legal representation, no diplomatic assistance from your country of origin, no due process and no fair trial...."

15. "Zero Tolerance"

Maja Zehrt noted in of right-of-center Leipziger Volkszeitung (12/06):

"Rice, Steinmeier and Merkel will walk on egg shells, if artfully, while, in fact, Chancellor Merkel wanted to - rightfully so - refurbish the German-American relationship. In addition, Germany is putting its hopes on America's help in the case of kidnapped German hostage Susanne Osthoff."

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Instead, the secret services' shady dealings are now taking center stage. Despite all attempts at reconciliation, Merkel must make clear that the German does not tolerate any human rights violations, not even in the war on terror. Unfortunately, the most recent revelations do not serve to strengthen her position. For this very reason, Merkel must take a very clear stance and state the self-evident: Germany is not a country without law."

C. (Iraq) Violence

1. "On The Verge Of A Civil War"

Karl Grobe commented in left-of-center Frankfurter Rundschau (12/7):

"Suicide attacks and kidnappings, torture and political murder have become an unbearable reality in Iraq. Ingredients of a looming civil war merge with usual crimes and despair, a foundation for radicalism. The naive hope that the situation could become calmer and more democratic after the elections in ten days and the establishment of Iraqi security structures is completely dashed."

D. (MEPP) Peace Process

1. "Assad's Bad Game"

Pierre Heumann opined in an editorial in business daily Handelsblatt of Duesseldorf (12/7):

"Shortly after the suicide attack in Netanya, the radical Islamic Jihad published a video in which it took over responsibility. but unlike Hamas, the organization does not want to take part in the upcoming parliamentary elections. That is why it does not show any consideration for the intifada-weary Palestinian population. That is why all Israeli military measures against terror will be in vain. An increasing number of Palestinians now see the link between the suicide attacks in Israel and the military counter measures, which often have the character of collective punishments because they make life for the people unbearable. That is why Hamas fears losing support. and is afraid that it could be indirectly made responsible for such measures at the ballot boxes.. But such considerations have no room in Islamic Jihad's policy..

"Over the past ten years, Israel has tried to eliminate

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the leadership of the organization. but the latest attacks shows that the organization cannot be defeated with military strikes, for Islamic Jihad has two important allies abroad. It is mainly financed by Tehran. and as far as logistics is concerned, it can rely on Damascus.. That is why Jerusalem makes Basheer al-Assad responsible for the terror of Islamic Jihad.. But we can assume that Assad will allow Islamic Jihad to continue its activities, since they serve his own goals. If he is to get under increasing western pressure because of his Iraq policy or his alleged involvement in the murder of Rafik Hariri and faces new sanctions, he could pin his hopes on the terror organization to defend himself and to nip in the bud the slightest approach for a peace policy."

E. (Iran) Russian Missiles

1. "Moscow's Monopoly"

Rudolph Chimelli argued in an editorial in center-left Sueddeutsche Zeitung of Munich (12/7):

"Tehran is currently profiting from the weakness of the others. The Europeans are shying way from bringing the dispute over Iran's nuclear program to the UN Security Council, while Washington does not consider a political unilateral move would be successful.. That is why, despite the lack of talent of Iran's President Ahmadinejad, Iran can afford a tinge of a policy of strength. The lesson is that it was worthwhile for Tehran not to give in.. The real winner in this conflict is Russia. Moscow came into the nuclear play only because Germany, under pressure from the United States, did not complete the nuclear power plant in Busheer. Since then, western experts have been out of the play and have no insight into events happening in Iran. Now the Russians have offered themselves as further partners for all future nuclear deals. Vladimir Putin only recently gave assurances to Iran that he would continue to hold his protective hand over Iran at the IAEA. The Europeans can no longer break Moscow's monopoly."

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